

Focus on

Fluoride

This newsletter is designed to share information on school fluoride programs with administrators, principals and teachers. PLEASE ROUTE THIS newsletter to staff working with the school fluoride program.

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The Benefits of Fluoride . . .

The following information was adapted from a fact sheet from the Office of the Surgeon General:

- ◆ Community water fluoridation is an effective, safe and inexpensive way to prevent tooth decay. This method of fluoride delivery benefits Americans of all ages and socioeconomic status.
- ◆ Brushing twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste is an easy way to prevent tooth decay.
- ◆ Fluoride works by stopping or even reversing the decay process. It keeps tooth enamel strong and solid.
- ◆ Community water fluoridation is considered one of the great public health achievements of the 20th century.
- ◆ Nearly all tooth decay can be prevented when fluoridation is combined with dental sealants and other fluoride products, such as toothpaste.
- ◆ Products with high concentrations of fluoride that are applied in the dental office or prescribed for home use offer additional protection for those at increased risk of tooth decay.
- ◆ Because older Americans now are keeping their teeth longer, fluoride will continue to be important for preventing tooth decay in this age group. Older Americans are especially susceptible to tooth decay because of exposed root surfaces and mouth dryness that may result from many medications.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dental decay is one of the most common chronic infectious diseases among U.S. children. Among low-income children, almost 50 percent of tooth decay remains untreated.

Oral Health of North Dakota's Youth



2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results:

The fifth biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted during the spring of 2001 shows that the oral health of North Dakota's children needs improvement. Weighted data were obtained from 1,377 seventh- and eighth-grade students and 1,599 students in grades nine through 12. Seventh- and eighth-grade students were asked about dental visits, while students in grades nine through 12 were asked about dental visits, daily brushing habits and cavities in their permanent teeth.

Daily Brushing...

- While three-fourths (75.9%) of students brushed their teeth daily, one-fourth (24.1%) did not.
- Female students (86.1%) were more likely to brush daily than were male students (66.6%).
- Only 70.5 percent of students in grade nine reported brushing daily, while 81.2 percent of students in grade 12 brushed daily.

Dental Visits...

- While 75.5 percent of students in grades nine through 12 had visited the dentist within the past year, 16.4 percent had not.
- Of these students, 1.6 percent has never visited the dentist.
- Females (78.9%) were more likely to visit the dentist in the past year than were males (72.5%).
- During the past year, 81.8 percent of students in grades seven and eight visited the dentist.

Cavities in Permanent Teeth...

- More than one-half (57.5%) of students reported one or more cavities in their permanent teeth.
- One-third (34.1%) of students reported no cavities.
- More than 8 percent of students were not sure if they have cavities or have not visited the dentist.

Oral Cancer Screening Saves Lives

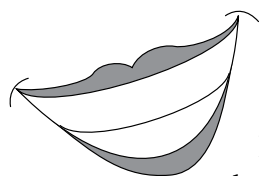
OCTOBER IS NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENE MONTH.

Want Some Life-Saving Advice?

Ask Your Dental Hygienist about an Oral Cancer Screening is the theme for this year's event. Its focus is on the important role an oral cancer screening can play in the early detection of precancerous conditions or the early stages of oral cancer, the sixth most common cancer in the world. Regular oral health checkups, such as those performed by registered dental hygienists, include an examination of the entire mouth and can save lives.

- ★ Oral or pharyngeal (throat) cancer will be diagnosed in an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 Americans this year and will cause about 8,000 deaths.
- ★ The vast majority of oral cancers occur in people older than 45.
- ★ This is the sixth most common cancer in the world, and it accounts for about 3.6 percent of all cancers diagnosed.
- ★ Men are affected two to six times as frequently as women.
- ★ The primary causes for oral cancer are tobacco products, alcohol and particularly the combination of heavy tobacco and alcohol use.
- ★ Smokeless tobacco use may increase the risk for oral cancer four times.

Early detection by dental hygienists and other health professionals may allow for early intervention and treatment, thus possibly reducing deaths from oral cancer.



Dental Sealants

Dental sealants are thin plastic coatings applied to the chewing surfaces of the molars (back teeth). Most tooth decay in children and teens occurs on these surfaces. Sealants cover the chewing surfaces to prevent decay.

Applying sealants does not require drilling or removing tooth structure. It is an easy three-step process: A dentist or dental hygienist cleans the tooth with special toothpaste. A special cleansing liquid, on a tiny piece of cotton, is rubbed gently on the tooth and is washed off. Finally, the sealant is painted on the tooth. It takes about a minute for the sealant to form a protective shield.

Sealants should be used as part of a child's total preventive dental care. A complete preventive dental program includes use of sealants and fluoride, plaque removal, careful food choices, and regular dental care.

Supplies...

For fluoride program supplies, call the Oral Health Program: 701.328.4930 • 1.800.472.2286 • Fax: 701.328.1412

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